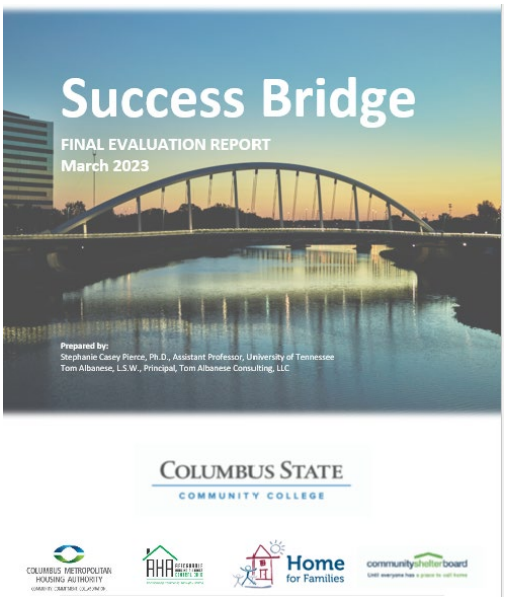



Columbus State Community College (CSCC) is the largest community college in Ohio, and among the largest community colleges in the nation. The college serves more than 25,000 students with access to quality and affordable education with options for over 300 degrees and certificates.

Similar to other community colleges, a large majority of CSCC students report myriad financial and other personal challenges, impeding their ability to remain in good academic standing while progressing and, ultimately, completing their academic program. For example, more than half of CSCC students respondents (60 percent) to the 2021 Trellis Student Financial Wellness Survey indicated they experienced one or more basic needs insecurities in the preceding year and 11 percent faced more than one. Consequently, CSCC has sought to engage community partners and develop additional student support services and referral relationships, driven by the understanding that "social determinants" – food and housing security, physical safety, transportation, etc. – can directly affect educational success.

In 2018, in partnership with Affordable Housing Alliance of Central Ohio (AHACO), Columbus Metropolitan Housing Authority (CMHA), Community Shelter Board (CSB), and Home for Families (HFF), CSCC began exploring opportunities to support CSCC students who are housing insecure. This partnership grew into a formal collaborative planning process and, with initial match funding from CMHA and other private investments, resulted in the creation of the ***Success Bridge Housing Stabilization Program*** in 2020, designed to "address the housing instability faced by low-income community college students that is a barrier to completion of a credential and demonstrate the impact of housing instability on family and community college success."[1] Additional match funding for the pilot was provided from the Alliance for the American Dream, Fifth Third Foundation, Bath and Body Works Foundation to underwrite the first three-year pilot period of Success Bridge.

Upon launch in Fall 2020, Success Bridge offered three levels of housing support depending on a student's need and longevity at CSCC:

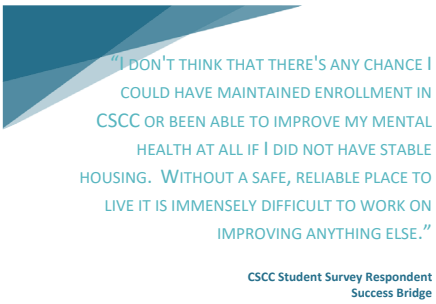
> ***Level One:*** Housing information and referral(s) to community supports. Available to all students with an identified housing-related needs.
>
> ***Level Two****:* One-time and short-term (up to 3 months) financial assistance along with housing and academic support services for eligible students with temporary housing needs, with housing-related case management and financial assistance provided by HFF.
>
> ***Level Three:*** Up to 24 months of fully subsidized housing in 22 units provided through an innovative partnership with Capital University, along with housing and academic support services for eligible students with more severe housing needs, including housing-related case management provided by HFF.

To evaluate the impact of Success Bridge on academic outcomes, Columbus State contracted with Tom Albanese Consulting, LLC, in partnership with principal investigator Stephanie Casey-Pierce, Ph.D. The evaluation examined students assisted by Success Bridge in academic years 2020-2021 and 2021-2022, with a specific focus on targeting strategies, administrative burden, and ease of access to the program, academic progress and outcomes, and potential areas for improvement.

[1] Affordable Housing Alliance of Central Ohio (December 2018). Briefing for Dr. David Harrison, Columbus State Community College.

*Key evaluation findings:*

- 454 applications for Success Bridge assistance (all levels) were received.
- All students who presented with a housing need were provided Level 1 assistance, consistent with the original program design.
- Just over half (52 percent) of applicants identified as Black, which is significantly higher than the general student population who identify as Black (19 percent).
- Of all Success Bridge applicants, 33 (7 percent) received Level 3 assistance and 57 (13 percent) received Level 2 assistance. The remaining 80 percent of applicants received Level 1 assistance in the form of general information and referral assistance, which might include information on the Mid-Ohio Market at Columbus State, Scholar House, or links to where students could look for housing (Figure 2).
- Just over one-third of students receiving Level 2 or 3 assistance who responded to the evaluation survey reported that, prior to seeking assistance from Success Bridge, they lived in an apartment that they rented without a subsidy. Another third reported living in a friend or family member's home, just over 20 percent of students reported living in an apartment they rented with a subsidy, while 6 percent of respondents reported living in temporary shelter (hotel or garage).
- Level 2 students who exited services were assisted on average for approximately three months, while Level 3 students who exited participated for just over one year on average.
- ***Every student who received Level 2 assistance was reported as having made a successful housing exit.*** Among Level 3 students who had exited the program by the end of the Summer 2022 academic term, nearly three-quarters made a successful housing exit.
- The overwhelming majority of survey respondents reported that Success Bridge was "very helpful" in both achieving academic goals and resolving their immediate housing need.




- ***Participation in Level 2 and Level 3 Success Bridge programming is statistically significantly associated with an increase in GPA, credit attainment rate, graduation and/or retention, and good academic standing.*** These findings generally *increase* in magnitude when the comparison sample is restricted to students who could not receive Level 2 or Level 3 due only to lack of credit hours—a comparison group that is likely to be more similar to the Success Bridge recipients than the overall group of Level 1 recipients.
- Other support services such as Emergency Rental Assistance, food assistance, and Student Support Services, had a positive association with academic graduation and/or retention.

Overall, results from the first two years of Success Bridge are positive and appear consistent with the original program model and intent. Further evaluation may be helpful to understand the finer qualities of programming and specific types, duration, and range of services and financial assistance that are most effective and desired by students. The evaluation indicates continuation and expansion of Success Bridge or like services that offer a similar range of housing assistance would be beneficial to CSCC overall and specifically for students who face financial and other housing stability challenges. The evaluation also demonstrates that students with more significant financial and housing-related challenges can be directly supported by CSCC in concert with community service partners to access more intensive short- and medium-term forms of housing assistance while remaining enrolled and, as a result, experience positive and measurable academic outcomes.